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O A K E N G A T E S U R B A N D I S T R I C T
F O R T H E
Y E A R 1941.

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On the instructions of the Ministry of Health the scope of the Annual Report has been restricted and again appears in an abridged form.

In the directions issued for guidance in compilation it has been pointed out that comparisons are likely to be fallacious owing to the variety and magnitude of local population movement and the uneven incidence of civilian deaths. This being so it is not intended to submit figures which would apparently be the basis for accurate comparison with those of peace times. Nevertheless such figures as can be given and may be indicative to some extent of internal population changes, of improvements in service, and the presence of disease in the Area will be found in the relevant sections of the Report.

The District enjoyed a year of comparative absence from infectious disease. Such notifiable conditions as were brought to notice were limited in their incidence and at no time did these give cause for concern. Particulars of diseases prevailing will be found in the relevant section of the Report.

1941 saw the gradual adoption of the Emergency Measures put into force in 1940 to meet the changed conditions of administration. Orders concerning Water Supplies, the Control of Housing, certain Infectious Diseases and the Service of Meat to the Town were the chief instances of these. For the current year the Ministry of Health found it necessary to guard against the possibility of spread of disease which could be associated with overcrowding and the movement of population. Orders giving guidance in the control and prevention were concerned with Typhus and Scabies and in connection with these, measures to be taken against lice.

During the course of the year the Ministry of Food, as an extension of their rationing scheme, granted invalids certain privileges and concessions to secure a more abundant supply: milk and eggs were mainly concerned.



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Officers of ~~Authorities~~ were given the opportunity to become ~~proficient~~ in the methods of dealing with gas contaminated food-stuffs and taking advantage of this, your Sanitary Inspector attended a course of instruction at Birmingham. The application of this instruction to his locality was the chief concern of your Officer.

The Principal Regional Medical Officer has at times directed attention to foods likely, through contamination to carry disease.

The capacity and provision of the District to deal with the hospitalisation of expectant mothers was the subject of an investigation by the County Medical Officer.

The attention of Medical Practitioners has been directed, as occasion arose, to matters of common interest: this with the view to securing the maximum coöperation in the maintainance of efficiency in health practice.

The Medical Officer takes this opportunity of thanking your Sanitary Inspector for his help and cooperation during the Year.

POPULATION. The remnants of the arganised evacuation scheme, members of which gradually drifted back to their homes, have now been finally dispersed. With local industry making ever increasing calls on adult labour and with other inducements to families to move into the Area, the Town has no longer any receptive capacity. Accomodation has been taxed to its maximum and in some instances, premises have been used for housing a purpose for which they were neither intended or suited. The chief difficulties arise after the incomers have gained admission and legal problems apart, it is often impossible on moral grounds to secure an ejectionment.

With unrestricted movement of population to this District it is futile to attempt to make that provision which would in large measure result in a good average degree of living comfort.

With conditions as they are the hope for improved housing seem to depend on the rapidity in progress in completing the scheme for homes for workers now in hand under a Neighbouring Authority.

Oakengates.CERTAIN FIGURES and STATISTICS supplied by the MINISTRY.

	Males.	Females.
Live Births	103	109
Illegitimate	4	7
Still Births	3	6

Deaths under one year 7

	Males.	Females.
Deaths	84	53

Some causes of death:	Tuberculosis (Pulmonary)	4
	Whooping Cough	2
	Cancer	29
	Cerebral Haemorrhage	14
	Pneumonia	7
	Road Accidents	2

Laboratory Service. The pathological and bacteriological connection with the University of Birmingham has been severed with the opening of the Donalson-Hudson Laboratory at Shrewsbury. This has been built as an annexe to the Royal Salop Infirmary. Another connection, that with the Emergency Health Laboratory at Wellington was broken when it was decided to move their Headquarters to Hereford.

Ambulance. During the course of the year the local Ambulance Association, owing to difficulties in maintaining service, transferred control of the vehicle to the Town Council who are now responsible for this work. The problem of the demarcation of disease for which an ambulance of this nature (for non-infectious disease) may be used has again been raised. With facilities for removal of infectious diseases available through the Isolation Hospital settlement is provided for the majority of cases but, from time to time, borderline diseases will require attention and the use of a particular ambulance will require to be left to the judgment of the health administrative.

The carriage is modern and well-equipped.

Water Service. The system of supply to the Area continues to require the closest supervision of the Water Engineer. With the elevated storage tank at the reservoir the in commission properties on the high levels should have improved supplies although there may be limitations. In the Snedshill and Priorslee districts improvements have resulted from the tapping of the private pipe line running from the main reservoir to the Lilleshall Works. Auxiliary and cooperative

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service has been strengthened by the connection of the system of the Wellington R.D.C. and that of the local Authority and in addition, the Council have become participants in the mutual assistance scheme for the district. Facilities have been granted to supply temporary needs in the Trench Area: to meet emergency requirements. The quarterly returns have shown the quality and purity of the water to be satisfactory but the scheme for general chlorination has still to be installed.

Mortuary Accomodation. For this service there is no provision for peace time but, to meet the present conditions, temporary premises have been acquired on the Holyhead Road and such re-conditioning has been carried out as is necessary to meet requirements.

Scavenging. Three motor lorries are in service and a fortnightly system of refuse collection is the aim. In addition, provision has to be made to deal with 600/650 privies and 360/380 pan-closets which are still within the Area of the Authority. The re-organisation of the means of dealing with the above has been the subject of a survey by the Sanitary Inspector, who has, in addition to deal with the present difficult labour problems.

Vermin Infestation. Control of the tip is carried out by arrangement with the County Council Rat Officer who has also, in the course of the year dis-infested houses in the district. Lice conditions in homes have been dealt with by local fumigation, bedding being sent to the Wellington Public Assistance Institution for steam dis-infection.

Shelters. No change has been made in the arrangement of surface shelters which are under the County Council control and supervision. Morrison table shelters are to be provided for houses where it is felt that this type of protection is most urgently required.

Sewerage and Disposal. No changes have been made in this scheme although there is in preparation plans for connecting the Parish Hall at Holyhead Road with the main system. Gullies and channels have been cleaned out at regular intervals and at the same time organised distribution of excrement has been maintained at the farm.

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Housing. With the changes in the international situation the work of housing still plays an important part in our everyday life. During the past year property maintenance has had to be curtailed in several respects owing to the shortage of building materials. If this continues for any considerable length of time, one can dimly see property in a bad state of repair and not a fitting example of the private landlord. (If Estate Managers very rarely get pains in the head, they are getting bad headaches now). Due to wise forethought of the Council the effect has not been serious in this District.

Leaving the war behind us we look to the future. Whilst we do not mitigate our responsibilities in the present, I am sure, there are moments when we can sit quietly and try to plan the future of the district. As you are aware overcrowding and unfit houses are rampant wherever you look, and this will be the chief item on the agenda of post war re-construction. As most of us are aware town planning and estate building will be state controlled and thus prevent the casual dropping of houses here and there with no idea for planning and alignment whatsoever. Mass house building in the shortest possible time has met its doom. The houses of the future must be designed with beauty and care, something to be idolised not criticised by music hall comedians and the like.

In this district the chances of building a new district to replace the old worn out houses is ripe for planning. Cannot one visualise the waste land that could be reclaimed and put to a useful purpose. The people of the district are wanting better houses, they are tired squalid conditions at cheap rents and no repairs. This can be substantiated by the 190 applications from residents during the past year. Is this not encouragement enough to plan your district ahead, so that when peace does come you will have a plan of operation, employment for men thrown out of work due to change over from war to peace. You have your chance to bring or invite factories into the district -- the land is here-- the railways are here -- it is a duty to the district. My interest is for a better

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England, with slums a thing of the past -- and towns a joy for ever.

Furthermore, in future house building one would like to see the good tenants of our older estates offered the new houses of the future, and the tenants, who require educating in the occupation of municipal houses, from unfit houses given the houses thus vacated. This will be an intermediate rise from the old slum house to the municipal house.

Rent Arrears. Rent arrears have been reduced considerably during the past year. This has not been due as many would think to improved economic conditions, but to the collecting of rents by psychology as recommended by the Ministry of Health Committee on Municipal Estate Management.

Gardens. Your tenants have responded well to the "dig for victory" campaign. 96% of the tenants have fulfilled their obligations of tenancy.

Whilst I would like to have had a garden competition organised as in most large towns, my time has been seriously occupied with British Restaurant, control of workmen, and the introduction of direct external painting into the work of the department.

Social Welfare and Service. We have no community centres on the estates except those provided by private enterprise. near to our Freeston Avenue estate. This should be a serious point to be considered in future planning.

Contact has been made with all tenants during the past year, and much advice on such subjects has insurance, pensions, income tax, wills, health matters and war time difficulties has been given. The housing department has now become a bureau of advice, and has definitely brought better relations between Council and tenant.

Estate management is a service, and not mere collection of rents. The recommendations of the Ministry of Health are carried out in every detail.

Maintenance etc., All maintenance and repair work carried out by direct labour under the complete control of the Estates Manager.

Oaken Gates.

Billeting. Your housing estates have borne the brunt of compulsory billeting in the area. Much credit is due to the way in which your tenants have patriotically shouldered the burden.

It is then I look with dismay on my mission to Whitehall to secure the completion of 56 houses at Trench to house war workers. Still the footings are there, the roads practically constructed, and yet only ten yards away, in fact, on the opposite side of the road many hundreds of houses are being constructed. I will say no more on the matter.

My space is limited to state more on housing, and would like to thank the Council for the help and encouragement they have given me in the past year, and not forgetting those Officers and Staff interested in the work of my department.

J. Cyril Lee.

Estates Manager.

Meat & Foods. The District continues to be served with meat from the Central Abattoir at Shrewsbury. Locally, the Sanitary Inspector working in cooperation with shop keepers has supervised and maintained control of perishable foodstuffs. A small quantity of these, mainly bacon, have had to be condemned and confiscated. The question of pig-keeping within the Area has been before the Council and close supervision has been exercised over a local pig-keeper. On these premises improvements have been carried out. The system of food storage and preparation has been placed on a sounder hygienic basis and a nuisance, arising from the use of offal has been eradicated by the discontinuance of this method of feeding. It was not possible to have a complete re-conditioning of the piggery carried out at this time.

With a view to furthering communal feeding it is anticipated that a British Restaurant will be opened early in the oncoming year. This will provide the people with hot mid-day meals at very reasonable rates. With the same object, the opening, by the County Council of a central depot for distribution of hot meals to schools in the

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neighbourhood is expected shortly. Provision has already been made for children at Wrockwardine Wood Senior and Hartshill Junior Schools. This by private arrangement.

The needs of the military personnel being met through the use of a Service Canteen in the Town.

Milk and Dairies. These have been inspected and maintained as far as conditions permit. The plan to secure a higher standard of purity in milk is expected to be put into operation in the incoming year. This will be worked in association with the Harper Adam's College.

Infectious Disease. While notifiable illnesses were brought to notice in considerable variety, at no time and in no disease were there any large numbers affected.

The greatest frequency occurred in the case of Measles which showed five cases in the First Quarter, twenty in the Second and ten in the Third. Following this came Whooping Cough with seventeen in the First Quarter, five in the Second and two cases in the Fourth. The foregoing indicates a relative escape of the District from these so frequently epidemic conditions and is at variance with the returns of other Districts of the North Eastern Area where there were much greater numbers involved.

Ten cases of Scarlet Fever were brought to notice and they occurred principally in the last six months of the year. All of these cases were treated in hospital.

Diphtheria was practically absent, one case occurring in the First and one in the Third Quarter. Of the two cases one was immunised and treated in hospital, none died.

An Assessment of the number of children in the Area protected by immunisation was made at the end of the year. The percentage returned was arrived at by crude reckoning and might have given a final result below that of the actual position, particularly where infants and pre-school children were concerned. Nevertheless, it has been felt that the high standard reached in the latter years of the thirties has not been maintained and there has been a considerable

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fall in the responso to the appeal of the Minister of Health. This falling off takes place at a time when the childhood of the Country requires every protection. The final figures, 10% for infants and pre-school children and 52% for school children were the lowest in the North Eastern Area.

Of diseases usually associated with War and over-crowded conditions there were three cases of Cerebro-Spinal Fever and one isolated case of Paratyphoid (Enteric) Fever.

Other diseases notified were:- Pneumonia (5), Puerperal Fever (1), Erysipelas (2) and Ophthalmia Neonatorum (2).

The comparative figures for the past two years from the Tuberculosis Register were as follows:-

<u>Males.</u>		<u>Females.</u>	
<u>Pulmonary.</u>	<u>Non-Pulmonary</u>	<u>Pulmonary</u>	<u>Non-Pulmonary.</u>
1940 36	33	22	41
1941 33	34	22	43

As indicated there is little change despite the congested and over-crowded conditions prevailing in the neighbourhood.

Contagious ailments, particularly scabies and impetigo have given rise to no concern so far as the assistance of the Health Authority has been concerned but there were indications at the end of the Year that the former disease was rising in frequency.

Signed. W.A.M. Stewart.

Medical Officer of Health.

July 1st. 1942.

Received of the Hon. the Secretary of the Treasury
the sum of \$1000.00 for the purchase of
land in the State of New York
for the use of the United States
Army and Navy
This receipt is given in full for the sum of \$1000.00
and is not to be used for any other purpose
except as herein provided
Witness my hand and seal this 1st day of January
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John C. Smith
Secretary of the Treasury

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